



# **HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT: Alicia Whitehead, HFD 713-495-7906**

## **PRESS CONFERENCE - BABY MOSES PROGRAM**

Fire Chief Phil Boriskie, State Representative Geanie W. Morrison, R-Victoria and local Child Protect Services held a joint press conference today, Nov. 7, 2005 at Fire Station 6 to increase public awareness of the Baby Moses Program.

The State House and Senate passed the Baby Moses Law with the backing of Representative Morrison on June 6, 1999 as the country's first newborn abandonment bill into law.

The "Baby Moses Law" allows a parent of a baby younger than 60 days old to turn over the baby to a designated emergency infant care provider and protects the parents from criminal prosecution when they deliver the unharmed child to a designated emergency provider.

Fire stations and hospitals were chosen as safe havens because of their ability to provide the necessary medical attention after birth, and their geographic locations. HFD has had several babies taken to fire stations as a result of this program. The most recent baby left at a HFD fire station was taken to Fire Station 46 in southeast Houston in March of this year.

Frequently asked questions about the program: (from the Baby Moses Program website)

If I want to leave my baby at a safe haven, where can I go?

- You may take your baby to any hospital, fire rescue station, or emergency medical technician (EMT) in the state of Texas.
- Please remember that it is VERY important to give your baby to a person working at one of these facilities. That is the best way to care for your baby.
- People working at these facilities usually have some form of visible identification.
- Tell the person that you want to leave your baby at the Safe Haven Site.

Do I have to take my baby to the closest hospital, fire rescue station or EMS station?

- No, you can take your baby to any hospital, fire station or EMT station in the state of Texas.

**-more-**

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How long can I wait before I take my baby?

- You can take your baby, up to 60 days old.

What will they ask me?

- The people at the safe haven facility where you choose to leave your baby may provide you with a voluntary form to fill out that are used to provide medical information for your child. This is NOT an attempt to try to find out who you are. This information will be put in your baby's records, and may help answer health questions in the future.
- You are not required to provide any identifying information such as your name or address.

Is it true that the police will not be called?

- The police will not be called if your unharmed baby (60 days old or less) is brought to a hospital, fire station or EMT station and given to a person who works there.
- If you leave your unharmed baby with an employee of a hospital, fire station or with an EMT, you will not be prosecuted for abandonment or neglect.

What happens to my baby?

- If you leave your baby at a fire station or with an EMT, they will give the baby immediate medical care and then transport the baby to the closest hospital.
- The hospital will take care of any additional medical needs that your baby may have.
- The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) will then take custody of your child.
- After the legal responsibilities are fulfilled by TDFPS, your baby will be placed with a caring family.